

House Ways and Means Committee
Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155



May 1, 2025

Dear Chair Stephenson, Chair Torkelson and Committee Members,

The Minnesota Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) is an association of nonprofit community development organizations and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) committed to expanding the wealth and resources of communities through housing opportunities and economic development initiatives. MCCD's mission to build strong and stable communities can only be achieved by addressing the harms and inequities that have shaped housing and economic development policies at every level of government. These policies have prevented many communities from achieving housing stability, accessing capital, and building generational wealth.

MCCD is writing to thank Chair Baker, Chair Pinto and members of the House Workforce, Labor and Economic Development Committee for preserving base funding for critically needed small business development programs.

- The **Small Business Assistance Partnerships Program** is a proven program that has been helping small businesses receive the support they need to succeed in every county in Minnesota for 14 years. The return on investment in this program is huge! In 2023, the program helped create or retain over 20,000 jobs, it serves the entire state, and leveraged over \$150 million in additional public and private financing.
- The **Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Fund** is a complementary program to the small business assistance partnerships program and provides affordable loan capital that can help with startup costs and leverages private financing from community banks, credit unions and philanthropic dollars.

Additionally, MCCD would like to thank the committee for preserving funding for the CanStartUp Program to support affordable lending to legal cannabis microbusinesses. However, we would like to request that \$2 million of the funds from the CanStartUp program be reallocated to continue to support the CanNavigate Program to provide technical assistance to entrepreneurs.

Thank you again and as end of session negotiations take place, please reach out to me should you need any additional information or have any questions. I can be reached at 612-387-6398 or kjohnson@mccdmn.org.

Sincerely,

Kari Johnson

Kari Johnson
Director of State Policy, MCCD